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OUR VIEW

Immigration reform snared in D.C. politics

Anyone who still has illusions that a legislative solution to immigration — both legal and illegal — is possible before the next election wasn't paying attention last week.

Paul Ryan, the newly installed speaker of the House, ruled out any comprehensive reform of the immigration system as long as President Obama is in office.

"I don't think we can trust the president on this issue," Ryan said on NBC's "Meet the Press" and other programs. "I do not believe we should advance comprehensive immigration legislation with a president who has proven himself untrustworthy on this issue."

Ryan was referring to Obama's attempt to give temporary legal status and work permits to as many as 4 million illegal immigrants by executive action, bypassing Congress.

We concede that the president's action, creative as he found it, was an egregious overreach of executive authority.

And the courts agree. A three-judge panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals last summer upheld a lower court's order blocking implementation of the order. The appeals court said the action goes beyond reasonable prosecutorial discretion allowed the executive branch by taking the affirmative action of conferring "lawful presence."

The president does not have the authority to grant work permits and temporary legal status to immigrants. The Constitution (Article 1, Section 8) gives Congress sole power to "establish a uniform rule of naturalization." Only Congress can change the law.

That it has consistently refused

to take action does not change the Constitution and allow the president to do so by fiat.

Still, the law needs to be changed and the fate of the 12 million immigrants living in this country illegally — and the industries that depend upon their labor — must be decided.

Republican leaders must rise above their pique and either in small bites or comprehensive fashion begin to address the issue.

Not to chastise without providing a solution, here are some tangible points to a plan that should be considered:

- Congress should offer illegal immigrants willing to register temporary legal status and a path to permanent residency after 10 years if they meet strict requirements — no prior felony convictions, no violations while awaiting residency, learn to speak English and pay a fine and back taxes. Those not meeting the requirement should be deported.

- As penalty for entering illegally, those made permanent residents should not be eligible for citizenship.

- We think the border must be secured. A viable guestworker program must be established, and employers must verify the work status of their employees.

It seems to us both parties are happy to use immigration as a wedge issue for the 2016 presidential campaign. To that end, a resolution now probably wouldn't serve their interests.

But this situation has dragged on long enough and won't be improved with the passing of yet another election.

We repeat ourselves in stating that the choice is simple: Make them go, or let them stay.

One way or the other, do it now.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of Publisher Kathryn Brown, Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, and Opinion Page Editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

YOUR VIEWS

Privatization of public lands serves no one

I'm becoming increasingly concerned we are going to end up visitors to areas our families have freely accessed since settling in Eastern Oregon, regulated at every turn we choose to take.

Coming away from the public meeting in Adrian, on the latest threat of over 2 million acres being signed into a monument, I've switched my attention to a coalition between the green machine Oregon Natural Desert Association, Pew Charitable Trust and Sierra Club joining with recreation-based businesses such as Keen Footwear. These are some of the principles, but not all, pushing the Owyhee monument. Is it about saving the canyonlands or selling more sandals to fill the coffers of private companies: self-serving coalitions with no interests to the negative impacts imposed on the local population, resulting in families being displaced. No recreationists are being held back from enjoying the Owyhee Canyonlands at the present time. Monument designation serves to protect the environment from more people, yet the term monument itself makes it seem grandeur and generates more interest.

If you were to believe the 30-minute presentation from Oregon Natural Desert Association, everyone comes out a winner. Access would remain, but they failed to mention closing the scores of spur roads locals have historically used for sustenance; failed to mention grazing will be negatively affected; economic values from the mineral resources would be lost. Urbanites all decked out in their subtle "look-at-me attire" could breeze in, spend a few days and dollars, and be gone just as they are free to do presently. Is it hard to understand that our historical, cultural access is not for sale? We

are doing just fine without your money.

A week after the meeting in Adrian, out comes the Presidential Memorandum, "mitigating impacts on natural resources from development and encouraging related private investment," encouraging related private investment. What in the world does this mean? The term "invest" means putting money in business, etc., in order to get a profit. It sounds like our public lands are for sale. One of the claims in the document is to "protect the health of our economy and environment." This is a general term that can and will be used to implement more redundant regulations from out-of-control bureaucratic agencies.

Nothing has worked to stop the landgrabs swirling around us. We desperately need representatives to serve the people they represent, be our voice at the table. Playing politics has not been a winning hand. It's time to quit bargaining away the very items you are entrusted to protect.

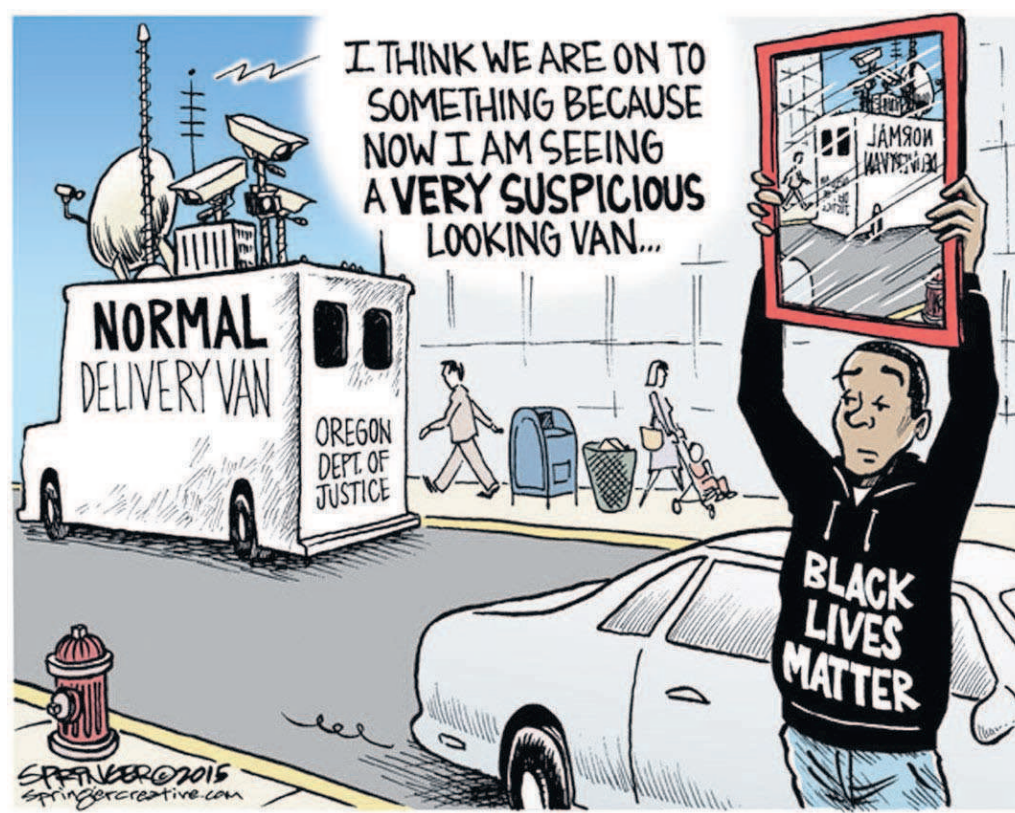
Wanda Ballard
Baker City

Does Pendleton need money or not?

Okay the election is over, it was a landslide. Please, Pendleton City Council, no more gas tax. The state will raise the gas tax soon. Let us poor folk enjoy the low prices while we can.

I guess the city does not need any more money. The city council could let us vote on retail and medical marijuana. By outlawing the sale of pot, no one will stop using it. The only result of not allowing a vote is the outlaws will collect the tax, not the city. Prohibition did not work for alcohol; a ban on retail sale of pot will not work either.

Rex J. Morehouse
Pendleton



OTHER VIEWS

Mizzou, Yale and free speech

On university campuses across the country, from Mizzou to Yale, we have two noble forces colliding with explosive force.

One is a concern for minority or marginalized students and faculty members, who are often left feeling as outsiders in ways that damage everyone's education. At the University of Missouri, a black professor, Cynthia Frisby, wrote, "I have been called the N-word too many times to count."

The problem is not just racists who use epithets but also administrators who seem to acquiesce. That's why Mizzou students — especially football players — used their clout to oust the university system's president. They showed leadership in trying to rectify a failure of leadership.

But moral voices can also become sanctimonious bullies.

"Go, go, go," some Mizzou protesters

yelled as they jostled a student photographer, Tim Tai, who was trying to document the protests unfolding in a public space. And Melissa Click, an assistant professor who joined the protests, is heard on a video calling for "muscle" to oust another student journalist (she later apologized).

Tai represented the other noble force in these upheavals

— free expression. He tried to make the point, telling the crowd: "The First Amendment protects your right to be here — and mine."

We like to caricature great moral debates as right confronting wrong. But often, to some degree, it's right colliding with right.

Yes, universities should work harder to be inclusive. And, yes, campuses must assure free expression, which means protecting dissonant and unwelcome voices that sometimes leave other people feeling aggrieved or wounded.

On both counts we fall far short.

We've also seen Wesleyan students cut funding for the student newspaper after it ran an op-ed criticizing the Black Lives Matter movement. At Mount Holyoke, students canceled a production of "The Vagina Monologues" because they felt it excluded transgender women. Protests led to the withdrawal of Condoleezza Rice as commencement speaker at Rutgers and Christine Lagarde at Smith.

This is sensitivity but also intolerance, and it is disproportionately an instinct on the left.

I'm a pro-choice liberal who has been invited to inflect evangelical Christian universities with progressive thoughts, and to address Catholic universities where I've praised condoms and birth control programs. I'm sure I discomfited many students on these conservative campuses, but it's a tribute to them that they were willing to be challenged. In the same spirit, liberal universities should seek out pro-life social conservatives to speak.

More broadly, academia — especially the social sciences — undermines itself by a tilt to the left. We should cherish all kinds



NICHOLAS KRISTOF
Comment

of diversity, including the presence of conservatives to infuriate us liberals and make us uncomfortable. Education is about stretching muscles, and that's painful in the gym and in the lecture hall.

One of the wrenching upheavals lately has unfolded at Yale. Longtime frustrations among minority students boiled over after administrators seemed to them insufficiently concerned about offensive costumes for Halloween.

A widely circulated video showed a furious student shouting down one administrator, professor Nicholas Christakis. "Be quiet!" she screams at him. "It is not about creating an intellectual space!"

A student wrote an op-ed about "the very real hurt" that minority students feel, adding: "I don't want to debate. I want to talk about my pain." That prompted savage commentary online. "Is Yale letting in 8-year-olds?" one person asked on Twitter.



Mark Schierbecker via AP

In this frame from video, Melissa Click, right, an assistant professor in Missouri's communications department, confronts a photographer and later calls for "muscle" to help remove him from the protest area in Columbia, Mo.

The Wall Street Journal editorial page denounced "Yale's Little Robespierres." It followed up Wednesday with another editorial, warning that the PC mindset "threatens to undermine or destroy universities as a place of learning."

I suggest we all take a deep breath.

The protesters at Mizzou and Yale and elsewhere make a legitimate point: Universities should

work harder to make all students feel they are safe and belong. Members of minorities — whether black or transgender or (on many campuses) evangelical conservatives — should be able to feel a part of campus, not feel mocked in their own community.

The problems at Mizzou were underscored on Tuesday when there were death threats against black students. What's unfolding at universities is not just about free expression but also about a safe and nurturing environment.

Consider an office where bosses shrug as some men hang nude centerfolds and leeringly speculate about the sexual proclivities of female colleagues. Free speech issue? No! That's a hostile work environment. And imagine if you're an 18-year-old for whom this is your 24/7 home — named, say, for a 19th-century pro-slavery white supremacist.

My favorite philosopher, the late Sir Isaiah Berlin, argued that there was a deep human yearning to find the One Great Truth. In fact, he said, that's a dead end: Our fate is to struggle with a "plurality of values," with competing truths, with trying to reconcile what may well be irreconcilable.

That's unsatisfying. It's complicated. It's also life.

Nicholas Kristof grew up on a sheep and cherry farm in Yamhill. Kristof, a columnist for *The New York Times* since 2001, writes op-ed columns that appear twice a week. He won the Pulitzer Prize two times, in 1990 and 2006.

Oregon scraping bottom in state government integrity rankings

By JOHN A. CHARLES JR.

This week the Center for Public Integrity released a report grading the 50 states on governance. The metrics used to measure integrity included the categories of "Public Access to Information," "Lobbying Disclosure," and "Ethics Agency Enforcement."

Oregon was ranked 44th among the states, with a grade of "F."

Oregon's poor ranking was not a surprise given the nationwide coverage of the Kitzhaber-Hayes influence-peddling scandal. By any standard, the behavior of our former governor was unacceptable.

But this was only the headline issue. Beneath the surface are many less-glamorous problems that will be difficult to address. For instance, there is virtually no meaningful oversight of state expenditures. Legislators spend tax money to promote their own

agendas, and the budgeting process is deliberately opaque in order to keep citizens in the dark.

Also, the law allowing us access to public records is constantly abused. Agencies frequently play games of "20 questions" in order to drag out the process; and when they do offer up the requested documents, they impose massive fees that most citizens cannot afford.

Unfortunately, no amount of "oversight" will solve the problem. Government is unable to police itself. Once a taxpayer sends money to the state, it's too late.

The best solution is to dramatically prune the weed patch of regulations and programs. A smaller government, focusing on a few core functions, will have more integrity than a larger one.

John A. Charles Jr. is president and CEO of Cascade Policy Institute in Portland